

The practical Use of public Judgments.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

St. PAUL'S, *Deptford, Kent,*

On F E B R U A R Y 6, 1756,

BEING THE

Day appointed by Proclamation for
a solemn F A S T,

On Account of the late EARTHQUAKES in

Portugal, Spain, *and* Barbary.

— *For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the
Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteous-
ness. Isaiah xxvi. 9.*

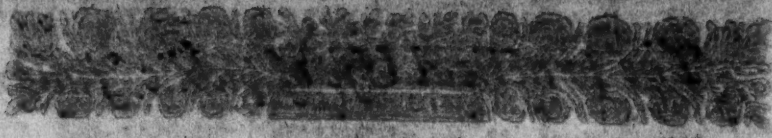
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By J A M E S B A T E, M. A.
Rector of D E P T F O R D.

L O N D O N:

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TO THE
HONORABLE
MEMBERS OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS

ST. PAUL'S, DEPTFORD

ON FRIDAY, 6th 1750

GENTLEMEN,

THE kind Reception this Dis-
course met with from the Pub-
lic, and your hearty and unanimous
Desire to see it in Print, have obli-
ged me to publish it, and I have
been so happy as to have it
delivered to you, and I have
thought or Intention of having made
public. However, if it does but in-
fluence your Practice, as much as it
seemed to excite your Attention, I
shall then gain that which always
has been, and of I am sure will be
out

(Printed by J. Smith)

TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF

St. PAUL's, DEPTFORD.

GENTLEMEN,

THE kind Reception this Discourse met with from the Pulpit, and your hearty and unanimous Desire to see it in Print, have obliged me to make you a Present of it. So, here it is, rough and unpolished, with all its Faults, just as I delivered it; and written without the least Thought or Intention of being made public. However, if it does but influence your Practice, as much as it seemed to excite your Attention, I shall then gain that which always has been, and 'til I am *quite* worn out

out in your Service, always *shall* be
— one main End of all my La-
bours; I mean the approving my-
self to be, with great Truth and Sin-
cerity,

GENTLEMEN,

Your faithful humble Servant,

James Batè.

ISAIAH XXVI. v. 9, latter Part.

— *For when thy Judgments are in the Earth,
the Inhabitants of the World will learn
Righteousness.*

IS a very melancholy Truth, but
a very notorious one, that no-
thing but real actual Feeling and
Suffering, can ever make the
Bulk of Mankind considerate, wise, and pru-
dent. All Motives to Duty that can be
drawn from the Light of natural Reason,
from Revelation, from *other* Men's exem-
plary Fate and Sufferings; all that can be
deduced from Similitude of Cases, and Pa-
rity of Reason, may perhaps be heard, for
a little while, with *some* Degree of Atten-
tion; but without actual Experience, Sense,
and Feeling, it soon fleets away, like a
Dream at the Dawn of Day; and gives
way to more agreeable, more lively, and as
we are but too apt to think, — to more *in-
teresting* Objects of our Care and Solicitude.
While we see whole Nations trembling un-
der the vindictive Hand of God, and hum-
bled

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bled to the very Dust, by those dreadful
Scourges of God, War, Famine, Pestilence,
Earthquakes, and Conflagrations, it may
perhaps make the Generality of People seri-
ous for a little Time, — it may raise their
Attention as to a Subject new and curious—
and tickle those Ears that are better pleased
with *Novelty*, than with the most useful
Truths of plain Christianity; — but then, it
too often happens that Attention *so* excited, is
apt to flag and fall when the Novelty of the
Subject is worn off: And the Words imme-
diately following my Text, are but too ap-
plicable to the Case of Mankind in general.
“ Let Favour be shewn to the Wicked, yet
“ will he not learn Righteousness: in the
“ Land of Uprightness will he deal unjust-
“ ly, and will not behold the Majesty of
“ the Lord. Lord, when thy Hand is *lifted*
“ *up* — they will not see.” But God grant
that now when his Hand is so visibly and
terribly lifted up upon others, we of this
Church and Nation *at least* — may see.
And as the Prophet says, in the Words im-
mediately before my Text; — “ With our
“ Souls may we desire him in the Night,
“ and with our Spirits within us may we
“ seek him early.” That so, while his
Judgments

Judgments are so dreadfully executed, and perhaps are still executing to this Hour, upon so many neighbouring Nations, — we the Inhabitants of this Island, may both *learn and practice Righteousness*, by a timely Consideration and Repentance; and not be forced and driven to it like brute Beasts, by the like fiery Judgments, actually sent down among us. That these Considerations may work their proper Effect upon *us*, I shall

First, Consider the very dreadful and unparallel'd Calamity, that occasions my present Address to you.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to discover the Views and Designs that God's Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice, may intend to accomplish, by such great and desolating Judgments as this. And,

Lastly, I shall offer some such Considerations from the Whole, as may be of Use to ourselves, in the Conduct of our Lives and Manners.

First then, I am to consider the very dreadful and unparallel'd Calamity, that

gives rise to this Discourse. Instances of the like Calamities by Earthquakes and fiery Eruptions, attended with the most devouring Conflagrations, as well as Inundations, are often to be met with, both in the ancient and modern Histories of foreign Countries: And something of like sort, we of this Island have formerly, as well as *lately*, felt ourselves. But as to this last, — which has almost desolated the whole Kingdom of *Portugal*, it exceeds any Thing in History. No Calamity of so general extent as this, stands recorded either in sacred or prophane History, save only *Noah's Flood*. For the visible Effects of it extended a thousand Miles, North and North-East of that unfortunate City, which was the head Quarter of the Evil. We are assured that it shook a great Part of the *Atlantic Ocean*, and was felt as far as the very Shores of *America*. And as to the Suddenness and Severity of the dreadful Stroke upon the Kingdom of *Portugal*, we may fairly assert, that there never was in History an Instance of so populous, magnificent, rich, and large a Metropolis, as well as many other fine Cities, so suddenly and so unexpectedly brought to utter Desolation. So that the Words of my Context
are

are justly applicable to this most tremendous Catastrophe. "The lofty City" — says he, (and such was *Lisbon* once, by her fine Situation; built like *Constantinople* and *Rome*, upon seven Hills) — "The lofty City, says the Prophet, — he layeth it low — he layeth it low even to the Ground, he bringeth it even to the Dust." And as the Prophet elsewhere says, "The Lord hath visited it with Thunder, and with Earthquakes, and great Noise; with Storm and Tempest, and the Flame of devouring Fire." He has even smitten their whole Land with "Perplexity, the Sea and the Waves roaring, and the stoutest of Men's Hearts failing them for Fear." And 'tis much to our Purpose to observe, that so uncommonly extensive were the Effects of this Calamity, that they were felt here in our own Island, remarkably so — and to a very great Degree of Danger on the Coast of *Ireland*, very sensibly perceived in the Heart of *Scotland*, and even in the Northern Parts of *Germany*. So that though the over-ruling Hand of God, so ordered the Course of Nature, as to protect these Kingdoms from any Share of the Desolation, yet thus much we may learn from it, that

— that our own Island is not destitute of such subterraneous Cavities and Communications, as are necessary to the Production of this dreadful Phænomenon. But with what Views and Designs the Creator has so ordained the Laws of Nature, and has so formed and constructed the Earth, as to make it liable to such tremendous Calamities, we come now in the

Second Place to consider. No doubt but that the Councils of God, where not plainly revealed to us, are absolutely unsearchable. For, as “all his Works are glorious,” so — “all his Thoughts are very deep ;” — greatly remote from the utmost Stretch of the human Understanding. We know by Experience, that he often blesses by Adversity, and punishes by Prosperity. With regard to our own Nation in particular, it would be no hard Task to make it appear, that the greatest national Blessings which we now enjoy, — and greater are they than *any* other Nation can boast of, — were all of them manifestly derived to us, through such national Calamities, as, at the Time when they beset us, seemed to threaten our total Destruction. For it is God alone who can dart his Eye
through

through Futurity ; it is he alone who can clearly look into, and unravel, the most complicated Connections of Things, and adjust them all by the surest Rules of unerring Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness. But though in Reasoning upon such Points as these, we cannot, indeed, see through every Thing, yet, we may see enough to make us sit down contented under God's Dispositions when they *do* befall us ; — we may see enough to make us better than otherwise we should be, and enough, though not perhaps to make us *comprehend*, or fully understand, — yet enough, at least, to make us *apprehend* — or see a Glimpse of — some of the brightest Attributes of God. Therefore, where *all* cannot be achieved, we must be contented with the Part we *can* attain to, and make the best Use of it we can. To proceed then. I must apprise you, that in our Reasonings upon such terrible Judgments of God, upon whole Kingdoms and States, as we have just been considering of, we are apt to fall into two opposite Mistakes, both of them very wide of the Mark of Truth.

The first is, that all such Calamities happen, by the fixed Laws of Nature *only*:
and

and that of Course, God intends just nothing at all by them. Others on the contrary are apt to think, that the more immediate Sufferers are of all others the greatest Sinners, and for *that* Reason the more immediately aimed at by the Stroke of Providence. As to the first of these, who maintain that all such Calamities are nothing more than plain Consequences of the fixed and stated Laws of Nature; we allow, there is much Truth, and a great deal of sound Philosophy in the Observation. We readily allow, that there is no great Reason to think, that either the late Desolation of *Portugal*, and great Part of *Spain* and *Barbary*, or any former Calamity of like sort, was brought about by any *Force* upon the Laws of Nature, or by any *miraculous* Interposition of Providence. We easily allow, that all might be effected by the ordinary Course of Things, and result from natural Causes. But what then? The next Question will be, — pray, Who was the original Author of these natural Causes? Who was it that *made* that Mould, into which the whole Frame of Nature was cast *at first*? Was it not that great Being, who could, with ease, *foresee*, and *forecalculate* every possible

possible Event in Nature? How easy was it for *him* who can foresee the Actions of Free Beings, *so* to contrive the Frame of Nature *at first*, as to make it suit all the Events he intended to bring about, from the Birth and Creation, to the Dissolution of the Universe? For Instance. When the Earth opened and swallowed up *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, and all that belonged to them, I, for my own part, make no manner of Doubt, but that the Opening of the Earth was effected by subterraneous natural Causes. And what then? A miracle still there was; and it consisted, not in the Opening of the Earth, but — in these Mens being conducted, by God's Providence, to encamp in that particular *Place*, and at that particular *Time*, in which God's Wisdom and Justice foresaw, that it would be proper to inflict that severe Judgment upon them. So, in all Calamities of like Nature; God, who cannot but foresee Men's Sins, could, with equal Ease, adapt the original Frame of Nature, as to make it fit, and prepared, to punish these Sins, whenever he knew before hand they would happen. For we know that even among *us Men*, many an ingenious Artist can compose a Machine, so as to strike at

its appointed Times : How much *more* easily, then, may we conceive the great Artificer of Nature may be able to adapt the Machine of the Universe, so as to answer all the future wise and wonderful Ends and Aims of his Providence. And with great Advantage to his own Glory too : Since a Miracle of Wisdom, is a Miracle of a far nobler kind, than barely a Miracle of Power ; and displays a nobler Attribute ; or rather, displays both Wisdom and Power at once. Thus in regard to *Noah's Flood*, — we are clearly told in Scripture, that God sent it as a Punishment for Men's Sins. And yet, a late great Astronomer, has, I think, very clearly proved, that nothing but a Miracle could have *prevented* the Flood. The Consequence, then, must be, that God who foresaw those Sins, did originally dispose the Frame of Nature, *so* as to bring on the Flood at that particular Time.

So that, you see, a particular Providence, and a fix'd and stated Course of Nature, are two different Things, that are yet — very consistent with each other. But,

Secondly,

Secondly, 'Tis a very great Mistake, as well as a very great Presumption, to pronounce the unfortunate Sufferers, to be always the greatest Sinners. For this World is not a State of *Retribution*, but, a State of *Probation* and *Trial*. God seldom punishes Sinners *here*. No. 'Tis not *here*, but *hereafter* that we are to hope for our Rewards, or to dread our Punishments. The Goodness of God does, indeed, smoothe the rugged Paths of Virtue by *some* Blessings upon the Good, even here in *this* Life; and the Peace and Order of the World is in *some* Measure consulted, by the Evils that befall the Wicked *here* upon Earth. — But then, — 'tis but an inconsiderable Share, either of *Reward* or *Punishment*, that God distributes *here* in this World: The World to come being the proper Scene, both of Punishments and Rewards.

Again. 'Tis impossible for *us*, to tell who really *are* the greatest Sinners. None but God, who searches the Hearts, can possibly pronounce *this*. For so *various* are the Circumstances of Mankind, so various are their Understandings, their Education, their Instruction, the Examples they see, and the Temptations they meet with, that

upon all these Accounts, the very *same* sinful Actions may be committed, with various Degrees of Guilt: since different Men may act, against various and different Degrees of Light and Information. You see, therefore, that 'tis both foolish and presumptuous, to think that the poor immediate Sufferers, in such great and general Calamities as these, are Sinners above all *other* Men. No, believe me; as our Saviour says, that neither those Eighteen, upon whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell, *so*, neither those many Thousands upon whom the Towers of *Lisbon* fell, were therefore Sinners above all other Men; but we may add, in our Saviour's Words, — with *some* Allowance I mean to the true Scope and Sense of them, — “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Which naturally leads me to consider in the

Third Place, what may be the true and real Aim of Providence, in sending from Time to Time, such dreadful Judgments down upon the Sons of Men.

What may be *all* God's Views in these Cases, *no* Man can tell. Prodigious Events have

have been brought about, by Accidents to all Appearance very trifling: much more then, by such great and uncommon Calamities. 'Tis enough for *us* to be certainly sure of at least *one* great and principal View of Providence in all these Judgments: And *that* we may, with great certainty, deduce from the Text. "When thy Judgments are in the Earth," says the Prophet, the Inhabitants of the "World will learn Righteousness." I was observing before, — how sad a Thing it was, and how great a Scandal to the common Sense of Mankind, that hardly *any* Thing but *severe* Judgments, *can* teach us Righteousness. Yet, so it is. And the Reason of the Thing is this. When the Business of the World moves on smoothly and evenly, according to the ordinary stated Course of Nature; — when we run pleasantly before the gentle Gales of Prosperity, without handing or trimming our Sails; — when we glide softly down the Stream of Providence, without rub or impediment; — why then, all this naturally lulls the Faculties of the Soul asleep: Just as the bodily Senses are imperceptibly betrayed into a pleasing Slumber, by the soft continued Murmurs of a purling Stream. A State of Things

Things this, which naturally takes the Soul from off its Guard, and lets in whole Troops of hostile Temptations, that are always ready at hand, slyly to attack and stab our Virtue and Religion to the Heart. For, this continued Stream of Prosperity, makes us first *neglect* our Duty, and *then*, quite *forget* it; sliding at length from one Wickedness to another, 'till by Degrees our Hearts become totally hardned. And if it happens that our Consciences within us are at any Time irksome, troublesome, and too importunately plead for a Hearing; — why then, we next have Recourse to that excellent old *Opiate*, that sure and certain Cure of a tender Conscience, — Atheism and Infidelity. A Set of Principles these, that were first invented, and brought into Use, as a fine *Soporific* for lulling all Pangs of Conscience and Remorse of Heart asleep; for fear we should awaken into Repentance and a Sense of Duty. And then, — if such People are Men of no great Knowledge or Genius, they content themselves, *some*, with barely neglecting their Church, while the major Part of them, prophane God's Sabbaths by Lewdness, Gaming, or Drunkenness. But those among them, who have *some* Sparks of Genius and

Know-

Knowledge, make it *their* Business to corrupt others, by arguing and disputing against Religion. But then, this is never done in the hearing of any Man of Sense and Abilities, who knows how to set them right. No. There generally, they are silent and crest-fallen; and cry out — “they are not a Match for such an one.” And it would be very strange, indeed, if Darkness, Ignorance, and Perplexity, should ever be a Match for Truth and Day-light. I only mention these Things to shew, to what Lengths the soft and easy Gales of a continued State of Health, Wealth, and Prosperity, are apt to carry us; ’till nothing else can raise us from the dangerous Slumber, but some severe and sudden Stroke of Providence. And if God did not love *us*, better than *we* love *ourselves*, such admonishing Judgments as these, had never been sent down upon the Sons of Men: since nothing but God’s fiery Indignation, *can* make “the Inhabitants of the World learn Righteousness.” Come we now, then, in the

Third and last Place, to offer some Considerations from the Whole, that may be of use to ourselves in the Conduct of our Lives and Manners.

First,

First then ; since it is evidently the Design of Providence, in all such dreadful Judgments as these, to rouse Men from a carnal Lethargy, to a just and proper Sense of their religious Duty, — let it work that happy Effect upon *us* ; and teach us to watch over our Hearts, with a redoubled Care and Vigilance. Always remembering that a stupid Insensibility under the uplifted and vindictive Hand of God, is a sure Mark of the most criminal Hardness of Heart ; and accordingly, is most highly resented in Scripture. For what, says God to the *Israelites*, upon a like Occasion, by his Prophet *Amos* ? “ I have overthrown you,” says he, “ as I “ overthrew *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and ye “ were as a Firebrand pluck’d out of the “ burning ; yet have ye not returned unto “ me, says the Lord. Therefore thus “ will I do unto thee ; prepare to meet “ thy God, O *Israel*.” God grant that *we* may have no Call to meet *our* God, in the Execution of such Judgments upon *us* ! For our *Gratitude*, as well as our Fears, ought, upon this Occasion, to spur us on to our Duty. For it is certain, that in the Destruction of *Lisbon*, they of the *British* Nation who sojourned there, were

were *indeed*, to repeat the Words of the Prophet *Amos*, "as a Firebrand pluck'd out of the Burning." So wonderfully were they preserved, that notwithstanding all the religious Bigotry of the Natives, and their fiery Zeal against Protestants, they yet thought themselves safest where the *English* were; and even forcibly detained many of them from embarking on board their Vessels, hoping they might stand, like *Moses*, between the Dead and the Living, and put a Stop to the dreadful Calamity. Such signal Mercies to our Countrymen, may justly make us offer the most grateful Returns of Duty to our heavenly Benefactor, and should make us dread the offending against such plain and visible Marks of Goodness and Mercy. But,

Secondly, Let us, neither be high-minded, nor too secure. It must certainly be confessed, that the Sins of the *Portuguese* Nation, and their Abuse of God's Blessings, were very great and provoking. They have been for some Ages, blessed by God's Providence, in a very signal Manner. — In the settling of their Government; — in their deliverance from the Yoke of *Spain*; — in the Discovery and Possession of many rich

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and

and fertile Countries in both the *Indies*; — in fruitful Seasons at Home; in prodigious Returns of Treasure from Abroad, in Gold and precious Stones; — and in a very extensive Trade and Commerce in every Branch. And it must be confessed, that they have made but very ill Returns for all these Blessings. Their Morals are corrupt to the last Degree; — they are even guilty of Sins that want a Name both in their own Language, and I believe in every other Language upon Earth. They are, of all Roman Catholic Nations, the most stupidly addicted to the grossest Dregs and Superstitions of Popery; — even to a Degree that is a Shame and Reproach to human Reason; one Minute, as I am assured, offering up Prayers and Incense to their Idols, to obtain their Favour; and then, whipping and slashing them to extort their Favour by *Force*. To which must be added, such Cruelty to those of other Religions, that their Inquisition, which was originally set up to extirpate the *Moors*, may now very justly be said, to have extirpated all Learning and Knowledge, as well as all civil and religious Liberty from out of the Country. And though the arrantest

Cowards

Cowards upon Earth, yet are they the cruel-
est of all Robbers and Cut-throats.

All this is very true; and enough, certainly,
to vindicate God's Justice in this fore Punish-
ment. But let us remember, that if *they*
have *their* Faults, so *we* have *ours*. Not
Faults so bad as theirs, I hope; but still,
bad enough. For when an *Englishman* sins,
he sins against the clearest Lights both of
Nature and Scripture, as well as against the
best Information, Exhortation, and Instruc-
tion from the Pulpit, that any christian
Country in the World is blest with. This
Consideration, exaggerates all our Faults,
which are many and various. For we no
where meet with so little Zeal in *Behalf* of
Religion, as here in *England*; nor is it any
where opposed with that Rancour and Bit-
terness, as well as that Sophistry and low
disingenuous Falshood, as here among our-
selves. No where do we meet with such
Blasphemies and Profaneness, as in our own
Streets, nor with more horrid Perjuries than
in our own Courts. And I think I can say
it knowingly, from what I have observed
in foreign Countries, that God's public Wor-
ship is no where so scandalously neglected

as in *this* Country. For though Sports and Diversions on *Sundays*, are but too frequently seen Abroad, yet *here* lies the Difference, — *they* never neglect God's Worship for them: While among *us*, our Ale-houses and much worse Houses *still*, are filled with the most dissolute Mob, — even in Church Time. I know we abound with excellent Laws to the contrary, — but pray, Where is either that Magistrate, or that Petty-Officer, that has the Courage to put them in Execution? Instead, therefore, of swelling and exulting upon any Comparison between the *Portuguese* and ourselves, let us look at Home; let us turn our Eyes inwards, and we shall see but too much Reason to repent, and amend ourselves.

Thirdly, It is well worth our Observation, that now, in these latter Ages of the World, when Prophecies, and Miracles, and preternatural Judgments, and, in short, when all *extraordinary* Interpositions of Providence are ceased; it is worth remarking, I say, that of course, as Men's Sins grow more and more flagitious, it is but reasonable to expect, at certain Periods, such alarming Visitations as these. And the Reason is plain.

plain. The Scriptures are given once for all: and if the Motives we find in Scripture, together with ordinary Grace of God, be no longer able to keep us up to our Duty, the Creator has *now* no other conceivable Way, to bring us back to our Allegiance, but by alarming us with these unusual and tremendous national Calamities. And no doubt but God has stored all Nature with Materials fit to produce, upon Occasion, such Judgments as we now commemorate, in every Part of the Globe. As to our own Island in particular, all who are acquainted with the natural History of it, well know that the Bowels of this Country abound with all the necessary Ingredients of Earthquakes, as well as any other. For Difference of Latitude makes no Difference as to Earthquakes; it being well known that there is a burning Mountain within a few Degrees of the Coast of *Greenland*; a sure Proof that the Materials of Earthquakes are *there* likewise to be found. And accordingly, that northern Part of the Globe was shaken greatly by an Earthquake, about two Months before the Desolation of *Portugal*. And though this Island never yet suffered much by these Calamities, yet

yet it appears from History, that we have felt them much *oftener* than either *Spain* or *Portugal*. Let us therefore not be too secure, but endeavour by our own good Behaviour, to bespeak the Favour and Protection of that God, who alone can rule the Helm of Nature with unerring Wisdom and Justice, and as well as Goodness and Mercy.

Fourthly, and lastly, It is most dreadful to consider, how suddenly and unexpectedly this great Destruction befel the miserable *Portuguese*. To see a great Prince, of the greatest *personal* Wealth, no Doubt, of all the christian Princes, — to see him, in the Space of about six or seven Minutes, from the highest Grandeur, reduced, for a Season, to the Condition of the meanest Beggar; suffering Nakedness, Hunger, and Cold, and destitute of a Place to lay his Head in! And in the same dreadful Moment, his capital City, and all his Palaces, and the greater Part of his Kingdom shattered into Ruins! And so many Thousands of his Subjects instantaneously swallowed up, in the general Destruction; and at a Time too — when they just as little expected it, as we

of this Congregation this Moment do; being both at *Lisbon*, and throughout all *Portugal* and *Spain*, assembled in their Churches upon a solemn Occasion, as *we* now are, on the Hour when this sudden Destruction came upon them. Surely then, so sudden and unlooked for a Catastrophe, may well teach *us* where to place our only Confidence, Hope, and Security. For *where* and *when* can we be safe, but under the Favour and Protection of that tremendous Being, to whose Nod, all Nature pays a ready Obedience and Submission: each Element being every Moment ready to fulfil his Word. But if we can securely trust in him, — then, — “ though the Foundations of the Earth be out of Course, — though the Earth move and shake withal, as holy *David* says, still — He will, in that Case sustain us; and will never suffer the Righteous to be moved.”

And after all, it must be ingenuously confessed, that, together with all our Faults, there are yet *some* Things that look well, and may give us better Hopes: and it would injure the Cause of Truth, not to produce the good as well as the bad. In the first
Place

Place then, that Spirit of public Charity to the distressed of every Kind, that now so much prevails in this brave and generous-hearted Nation, let it come from what Motive it will in *some* Men, — must yet be a very laudable Thing in itself, and must certainly more or less, be acceptable to God ; since it *must* come from a good Motive *some* where. And here, 'tis worth observing, that when his Majesty's late Message to the House of Commons, recommending a speedy Assistance to the distressed *Portuguese*, — when it came to be delivered and enforced — by the finest SPEAKER that ever graced a public Assembly, — it met with so general and ready an Approbation ; and the Assent of the House was given to it, so heartily and unanimously, that their Voices sounded like a sudden Clap of Thunder : To the no small Honour, of the good-natured, brave and generous Nation they so worthily represented.

Then again, we are greatly improved, in Point of Loyalty, Gratitude, and Confidence in our Prince ; and are more sensible of the Blessings of a good Government, and wise Administration, than we

used

used to be. And accordingly, there are fewer and fainter Endeavours *now*, to clog the Wheels of Government, under the Mask of Patriotism, than formerly there were. Had our Fore-fathers but behaved as well to the glorious King *William*, — what Thousands of Lives, what Millions of Treasure had there been saved to this Nation! There also reigns a greater Unanimity among us, in Matters of Politics, than *ever* there did; to the great Confusion, Terror, and Disappointment of those ancient Enemies of *Great-Britain*, the encroaching, false hearted and perfidious Court of *France*. — Enemies, — to whom an Hundred Thousand Invaders, could hardly be more terrible, than the bare Unanimity of the *British* Nation at *this* Time is. And as in civil, so in our religious Polity, I hope we are not a little amended; for our dissenting protestant Brethren, have, for many Years been treated, with that truly Christian Spirit of Toleration, (I say *Toleration*, and not *Submission*,) which will ever best promote the Cause of real Truth, amongst reasonable Creatures: — a Cause, which *can* flourish only in that Country, where civil and religious Liberty are enjoyed; and where nothing but Anar-

chy and Confusion, — Indecency and Licensiousness, are wish'd to be excluded. And we may truly add, that the Church of *England* now grants a greater Degree of Liberty to all those who dissent from her, than was ever granted to the Church of *England*, by any Sect whatever, when the Reins of Power were in *their* Hands. These are Things, I say, that must be allowed to look well, and are very commendable: They may justly give us Hopes of arriving, in Time, at yet greater Perfection; “till at length we all
“come, in the Unity of the Faith, and of
“the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto
“a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the
“Stature of the Fulness of Christ.”

And now to conclude all. We have been meditating upon a Calamity, most uncommonly dreadful in its Nature, and extensive in its sad Effects. Let us not be contented, then, with looking upon what has been here said, barely as a Discourse upon a Topic uncommon, new, and curious; and fitted rather to entertain the Fancy than improve the Heart: no; let us rather wisely apply it, — to a more durable and more solid Use. Let us consider, then, — that as
all

all Bodies politic, are composed of Individuals, it must of Course be the Duty of every individual Soul among us, to exert the utmost Endeavours, towards the Amendment of every *private* Fault peculiar to each of us. For *then* only may we hope for public and national—as well as private and domestic Blessings, from the liberal Hand of God : and *then* only can we reasonably hope, to avert from our Country, all public Calamities and national Judgments. And may the amazing Judgments just now showered down upon so large a Part of this Globe of Earth, wherein “ a Thousand have fallen beside us, and many Thousands at our Right Hand,” — “ While his Faithfulness and Truth, have been *our* Shield and Buckler ; may they happily make us to become wise unto Salvation. So shall we continue to dwell securely under the Shadow of the Almighty, and be safe under his Wings.” Until at length, we shall be happily conducted by God's Providence, through all the Perils and Dangers of this transitory life, into the joyful State of Eternal Bliss. Thither may God's Mercies bring us all at last, through the Merits and Intercession of

of

of Christ Jesus our Lord; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one blessed and adorable Trinity, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty and Dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

In the Case of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, p. 9. as the Account I there give of that Miracle, only my own private Opinion, I lay no great Stress upon it; being far more desirous to clear up old seeming Paradoxes, than to add to the Number of them, by hunting for new ones. Only I should have observed, that the Fore-Knowledge of this Event, which was certainly given to Moses by Inspiration, was an indisputable Proof of a divine Interposition. But whether this Opening of the Earth, was effected by an instantaneous Miracle, or by a previous Disposition of Nature, is not quite so clear I acknowledge. But as to the Case of Noah's Flood, p. 10, I think I may venture to be a little more sanguine there: and to say, that whatever Mr. Whiston's Notions were in some other Respects, still, that his Solution of the Flood, in his Theory of the Earth, is both sound Astronomy, and sound Divinity too.

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